



## In other news

July 1, 2013



## Connections has a new name: *Community Connections*

As you may have noticed, we're working to improve *Connections* to make it more valuable to you. A change we're introducing this month is a new name: *Community Connections*. We feel it better reflects what we hope this publication provides: a connection between the Laboratory and the communities it touches.

We're also planning to run a reader survey this fall to gain additional input on how we can improve this publication further. We hope you'll take a few moments when the time comes to give us your feedback.

Of course, you can send us comments at any time by writing to us at [connections@lanl.gov](mailto:connections@lanl.gov).

# Kirtland Air Force Base wins Robot Rodeo

Police and public safety teams from as far away as New Jersey recently convened in Albuquerque to test their ability to remotely deploy robots under a variety of challenging settings. The eight teams participated in events designed to test their mettle and their metallic companions in the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Robot Rodeo in late June.

Robots are used when sending in a human responder could result in serious harm, such as locating a possible bomb or if noxious gasses or hazardous chemicals are present. However, getting these 400 to 800 pound electromechanical servants to remotely do one's bidding is more difficult than it might seem. One of the goals of the competition is to give participants some concentrated rehearsal or "stick time," as it is known, to hone their skills with their robots. The Rodeo is held every year and is held alternating years by Los Alamos and Sandia national laboratories.

"During the two and a half days of the Rodeo, responders get about 30 hours of practice," said Chris Ory, with the Lab's Emergency Response Group. "This year's tasks included functioning in an actual post office in the dark and in a gallery above the workspace to introduce additional spatial difficulties. In one test we made the environment extremely noisy to help simulate the chaos associated with actual disaster scenes."

Vendors were on hand to display new robot technology as well as keep the robot contestants running during the "games."

## **And the winners for the 2013 Western National Robot Rodeo are:**

1<sup>st</sup> place: Kirtland Air Force Base's Explosive Ordinance Disposal Flight

2<sup>nd</sup> place- Albuquerque Police Department Bomb Squad

3<sup>rd</sup> place- New Jersey State Police Bomb Squad

Winners received trophies, plaques and tools they can use to help improve the capabilities of their robots.

This year the Israeli National Police attended the event as observers. The organization may participate in the event in coming years.

## **Imagine Education receives \$1.05 million grant**

Taos-based [Imagine Education](#), a previous Lab Venture Acceleration Fund recipient, has received additional funding through a highly competitive [Federal Small Business Innovation Research grant](#). The company's goal is to encourage the adoption of storytelling techniques to aid learning. The company previously developed the award-winning *Ko's Journey*, an interactive game that integrates practical math skills, and

produced a documentary called *The Biggest Story Problem: Why America's Students Are Failing at Math*.

The \$1.05 million grant will be used to develop a web-based, multi-player pre-algebra game called *Empire*. Designed for seventh-grade students, players will use math to tax their populations, allocate resources and barter with other students.

## Company holds math conference in Santa Fe next year

The company is planning a national math conference for March 27-29, 2014 in Santa Fe in conjunction with the Santa Fe Public Schools. The three-day event, called [MidSchoolMath National Conference](#), will focus on "Stop the Drop," or the phenomenon of the rapid decline in U.S. math scores that tends to occur during middle school.

In addition to funding through the Lab's Venture Acceleration Fund, Los Alamos Connect provided the company with market analysis and other support that helped the organization in its critical early days. To learn more about how Los Alamos Connect could help your regional business, check out its [website](#).

## Lab distributes teacher resource kits

Kindergarten through fifth grade teachers in Northern New Mexico will soon have new resources to support them in their classrooms thanks to the Lab's Community Programs Office. The 100 binders slated for distribution contain information on the Lab's history, science and activities designed to encourage STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning in the classroom.

In addition to Lab-based resources (such as the Lab's popular [Periodic Table of Elements](#)) the binders contain resources from the National Science Teachers Association and other curriculum designed for [inquiry-based science](#).

The first binders will be distributed at an upcoming teacher workshop that will also include a presentation about [Common Core State Standards](#).

For more information, contact the Janelle Vigil-Maestas with the Community Programs Office at (505) 665-4329 or [vigil-m@lanl.gov](mailto:vigil-m@lanl.gov).

Los Alamos National Laboratory

[www.lanl.gov](http://www.lanl.gov)

(505) 667-7000

Los Alamos, NM

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